



It Needed God

The Task That Was Bigger Than Abraham Lincoln

By JAMES OPPENHEIM

Drawings by Herman Pfeifer



ABRAHAM LINCOLN stood a moment in the East Room of the White House, and the golden light splashed full on his face. The last minister, the last general, had gone. Even the doorkeeper had

departed. He was alone.

His was the most tragic figure in this world.

Every motion, every expression at that moment was charged with meaning for his country. He raised a heavy, huge hand—plow calloused—and passed it over his face. As it passed away it left the face bare. The big under lip twitched, the old, human mouth showed sorrow at the corners, the cuts and seams of the gray, suffering face contracted, the cavernous dark gray eyes filled with a mist. The job was too much for the man. It needed God—none other.

Suddenly he sank in a chair, groaning half aloud:

"I shall never be glad any more—the springs of life are wearing away, and I shall not last!"

The big face, the big mouth, the big nose, the great, broad jaw went into his smothering hands, and six feet and four inches of man were doubled up into a despairing child. Never was a soul more alone than this one. The big room was empty; the big house was hushed into sleep. Washington encircling him lay as dead beneath dead stars. And off in the night in the vast distances a continent—a nation—a people lay down to sleep. Dotting the land across a thousand miles were armies of thousands of men. Their bivouacs might be flaming with fires at this instant—sentinels tramping. They might be lying down at the eve or end of some slaughtering battle. And then about them, beyond them, south, north, and west—soft! soft!—oh, the many, the myriad farmhouses with their sleeping women and children and babies, the great beating hearts of cities. Not one soul in all this America but carried a burden too hard to bear—the burden of war, of poverty, of sacrifice, of death.

And yet this groaning man in the East Room was alone. Alone in that room—alone in that house—alone in Washington—alone in that sleeping continent—alone beneath all the worlds shining in the September night.

The burdens of thirty million souls were his.

Sitting in that room in the silence of the night Abraham Lincoln thought here and there over the yesterdays and to-morrows. They were dreadful bits of thought. He was called to account by every one. The North was full of sedition, of rumors of defeat, of doubt. He was hauled over the coals by the press, the politicians. Why had he done this, why that, why not something else? He was a simpleton, a bungler. "God send us a man," was the prayer. He was a despot, said some; others, he vacillates, he will not act. A great clamor had arisen that he free the slaves; a counter-clamor was against it. He had done nothing but wait—and work. England was threatening war. Congress was full of murmurs. His own cabinet was divided. But worst—the Union troops were suffering defeat after defeat. The Army came, smashed and torn, back on Washington. Lee had crossed the Potomac and was rushing north through Maryland; McClellan was hot after him—but who had faith in McClellan? Perhaps even now McClellan was flying, tattered, before the genius of the South. Truly the Union seemed doomed, and all the guilt was fastened by all on this lonely man—this "Honest Old Abe."

How his face had aged in the last year! How the wounded, broken, suffer-



The burdens of thirty million souls were his

ing, lowly millions of America all looked, sublimely tragic, through these deep-set eyes! This face was America suffering! This face was that of a people, not a man!

The head, with its shock of crazy black hair, was raised slowly; a big hand dove into a big pocket and pulled out a torn and worn little book. It was Macbeth. Slowly the big hand fumbled and fumbled. The eyes went near to the page. The lips began to move. In the intense silence these words walked like ghosts through the hushed air:

*Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.*

"Duncan is in his grave," he repeated to himself, shaking his head slowly. "Ah," he sighed, "I envy the soldier who sleeps on the ground in the Army of the Potomac."

He repeated the lines again, half drunk with sorrow and despair. He thought of his son Willie who not long before had died. It had made him feel his own weakness—almost a woman's weakness. It had been the hardest trial of his life. Even now the big man quailed before the memory, shivered, and groaned. And then, curiously, he began thinking of the slaves of the South—the miserable black animals that somehow were human men and women and children—"the bondmen" whose drops of blood were "drawn with the lash"—the souls that were bred, used, bought, and sold like heads of cattle and herds of sheep. He remembered how he had reproved one old darky in the street who called him "Mr. Messiah, what know eberty'ing and walk de earl wif de Lord."

And at that thought, like a flash, his big mouth lit with the marvelous smile that made it evident that "to know this man is to love him." But the smile vanished. He thought of the black animals and their two hundred years

of "unrequited toil." He thought of the declaration that "All men are created free and equal." His heart seemed to break within him.

Again his head went down in the plow-calloused hands. Again he groaned. The job was too big for the man—it needed God.

"O God," he suddenly prayed, "why dost Thou delay—why dost Thou wait? I cannot bear it. I cannot endure it. I have not Thy strength. Oh, send us victories! victories!"

He clenched his fist: "Victories!" he muttered.

And he thought, with blood suddenly racing, that at the first victory he would dare all—death, shame, defeat—all. He would come out and tell his cabinet that he would free the slaves. He would issue his Emancipation Proclamation. He would free every soul on American soil. The black animals were to be men and women and children—mothers, fathers, fellow men—human beings. The power was his—a power greater than Napoleon's—a power that made him tremble. It was the power of a god—and he was only a poor, human man.

If only the victory would come! Months he had waited; for months the armies of the North had been shattered by the rebels; for months the storm had been breaking on his old head; for months he alone had been carrying the world on his shoulders. He stumbled in darkness; his burden bore him down to the ground. And yet no victory! And yet not one ray of hope! Not one hint of the dawn!

"Victories!" he muttered. "Victories! Oh send us victories! Or—

take me. I will never be glad again. God, I cannot bear it any longer! Help me! help me!"

He staggered to his feet, sobbing. He lurched across the floor. It was the blackest moment of his life. He staggered through the doorway, found the stairs, climbed them, sought out a dim room, and stood at the entrance, his great shoulders and his broad breast wrenched with long, unnatural sobs. The man of sorrows stood in that doorway.

Then softly he tiptoed in. Softly he bent over a couch. Softly he leaned—dimly he looked. A boy of ten—Tad—was curled up fast asleep. His breathing came regularly. His face was boyishly pure and serene. The sight was like balm. The aged heart was soothed and stilled and quieted. The big man got on his knees, took one little chubby fist and smothered it at his mouth. Tears ran down his cheeks.

Then he arose to all his height—hesitated—stooped—softly caught the boy up in his long, long arms and his big hands, drew him near to his breast, the head near to his face, and carried him off across the hall to another room—a dark, black room—his room. In the blackness he undressed the sleeping boy, who lay across the bed, pulling off his clothes—his shoes and stockings, his shirt and trousers—slipping on his nightgown, and tenderly tucking him in the far corner of the bed. He sat then at the edge of the bed himself and took off his own clothes. He clambered into bed. He drew up the covers. He reached out for his son, his child. He brought him close—very close—cheek touching cheek—and suddenly he smiled. That smile was a prayer.

And even at that moment, like a startling dream, there was a tramping of feet below, a wild hurry and noise of voices on the stairs, a clanking without, loud, eerie, disturbing, and nearer and nearer—a terrible rat-tat-tap on the door. His heart grew hot and seemed to burst in fire in his breast. He slipped out of the bed to the cool floor. He could hardly breathe. The veins stood throbbing out on his temples. His hands were clenched. He swallowed thick and hard and fast.

Quickly—stumbling, staggering—he beat his way over to the door; he flung it open. In the dim night he showed in the doorway gigantically tall and homely and thin in his nightgown. He peered out. A soldier stood there. The soldier saluted.

"Dispatch from General McClellan. Important!"

His voice came as if he were choking.

"Give—me. Give me!"

He snatched the envelope; he lurched over to a flickering wall light. He tore the envelope. He hardly dared to look. What if the cause were lost? What if Lee were conquering the North? What if—what if— He pulled out the paper; he pushed it open against his body; he held it out. He could hardly see. He was gulping and choking. And then came the miraculous words—the winged words:

Lee is beaten. Battle at Antietam. The enemy is flying. Am pursuing him. McCLELLAN.

"Lee—beaten," he gasped out. His lips were parched; his head swam.

And then the great glad shock thrilled through him from head to foot. His blood sang in his body. He could say not a word. He could only go like a drunken man back through the doorway—across the cool floor, and fling himself against the side of his bed on his knees. He could only burst out:

"God, Thy will prevails! Victory! Victory!"

He rolled into bed; he drew his son close; he breathed deeply, deeply. The Union was still living.

And then for a moment this man who so rarely thought of himself was stricken by the dazzling light of fame. The glory of the name of Abraham Lincoln glowed white about him. He sat up in the dark room. He muttered to himself:

"To-morrow it will be done!"

But as he lay back he drew the boy close again; the vision faded; he smiled with inscrutable sadness, and once again the tears flowed down his cheeks. He knew—how well he knew—at that moment how little a part he was playing. Something behind all things—something beneath all things—the vast Power and Love—were working out in America the liberation of the toilers of humanity. And he? He, the common man—the boy born of "white trash," poor whites in Kentucky—the boy inured to hard farm-hand labor—the poor country lawyer—Old Abe—the rail splitter—yes—he smiled grimly to himself—though on a throne, he was still a common man—same old stuff—same Old Abe—same old loafer and joker and comrade. He had a Napoleon's position and power. He laughed at himself. How poorly Napoleon's shoes fitted his big feet. He was so durned

common—such a plain person—anybody could speak to him, poke fun with him—even "niggers."

And then he thought again of his Proclamation. It was safely waiting in some desk drawer. Which? He forgot which. He was pretty shiftless about things and the old Proclamation might be in his hat band for all he knew. For a moment it flashed across his mind that this Proclamation might lead to his own downfall, his disgrace. Was the country ready for it? It was a daring act, and he had to do it alone. No one else could share the responsibility. At one stroke of the hand of one man—and that man himself—the slaves of two centuries, the millions of black animals, would be promised their freedom if the Confederacy did not surrender by the first of the year. And if he made the promise he would keep it. A terrible power was in his hands. That stroke of his pen might ruin these United States with all the future millions on millions of human souls! The responsibility was too much—it was impossible—it crushed him down again. Into his face came the look once more of America suffering. He could not endure it any longer—victory or no victory.

And yet he laughed in the darkness:

"Why," he argued with himself, "did the Lord put such a milksop at the top of things. Old Abe is too fond of his kind; loves human beings too much. 'Twon't do, Father Abraham!"

He lay for some time staring into the darkness. He was aware again of the little boy breathing and throbbing at his side. He drew him closer. But up and up he looked, as if he saw God. And then into his breaking heart, his shattered soul, a flood of light seemed to be poured; it streamed into him; it swept through him; the room seemed charged with spirit. Making him tingle, came the divine glory. He breathed deeply through open mouth; his nostrils quivered. He felt strong; he felt buoyant; he felt sure. It was the sacred moment. He knew now he would go on with the task until it was ended. He knew now that God was with him. He knew now that he was the tool which God's great hand was using in the Nineteenth century. He determined, once and for all, that come death or defeat, he would go forth on the morrow and issue his Proclamation. The slaves should be free!

And with a glory playing through him and his blood singing, the aged, war-worn President—his son cheek to cheek in his arms—fell asleep, and in that black room two souls lay suspended in insensibility, but breathing, throbbing, dreaming all through the long night and the slow dawn and the rising of the sun. And about them slumbered the big house—and encircling that Washington slept—Maryland slept—Virginia slept—State beyond State lay, housed or out in the bivouacs, beneath the stars. America lay sleeping—North and South lying side by side like loving brothers in the peace of God.

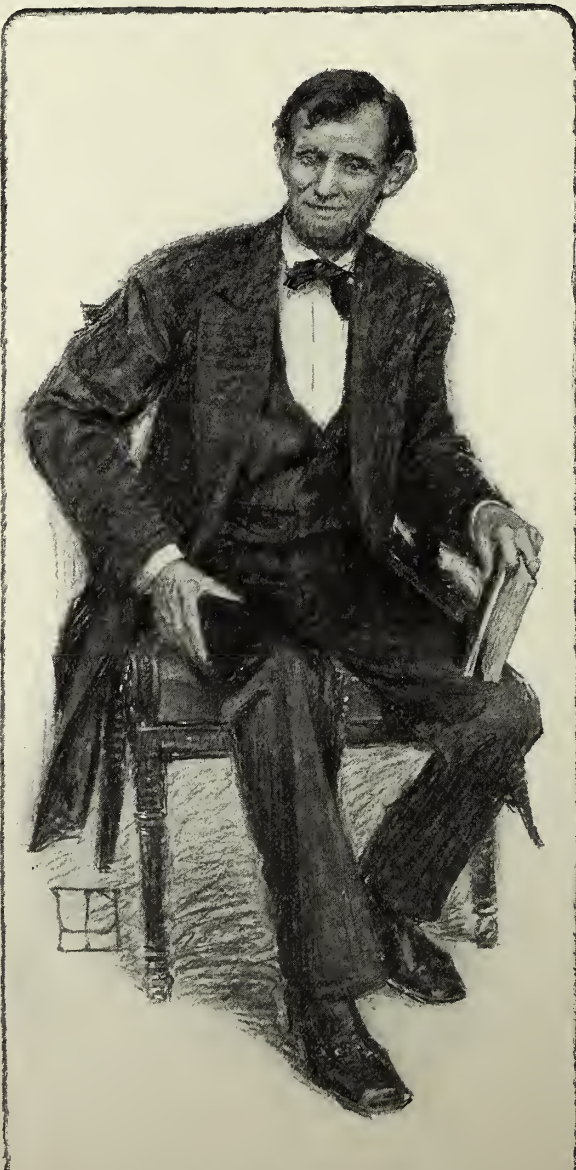
But what a wild jubilation in Washington when the sun was rolling up the sky! The news was sown through the streets. Hospitals trembled with it; the army quivered and shook and shouted; the bugles sounded; the cannon crashed; flags blew in the fresh breeze; people rushed up and down the avenues with glorious joy. The members of the cabinet hurried to the White House at noon. They gathered in the President's plain office. They were all there—among them noble Chase and little Seward and big, volcanic Stanton.

They drew close together, excited, expectant. Would the President issue his Proclamation? Would they dare to agree with him if he did? Would they dare to oppose him? Mighty men were these—strong—well-educated—and yet, somehow, before Abraham Lincoln, the plain, awkward, uncouth fellow in ill-fitting clothes, they were a lot of schoolboys.

"He is the best man of us all," said Seward. Despite his jokes, his nervous, awkward ways, his big clumsiness, they felt instinctively the power, the passion, the prayer—American suffering—that gazed out at them through the dark-gray eyes, that spoke out to them—how clearly, how tersely—through the big, old, human lips.

They could hardly contain themselves in their excitement and expectation. This was one of the crisis days of history—of the ages. This day marked the turning-point of the Nineteenth century. This day they were actors in one of the most stupendous dramas of the human world. They themselves in a few moments would be making history. It was a solemn hour—the most solemn in their lives. They were hushed and stilled by the eternal gravity, the sublimity of the occasion. It was a time for looking into their own hearts. And they waited and waited. Lincoln was long in coming.

The minutes crept by. Their talk ceased. They became very restless. Each man took his chair. The chair at the end of the table was empty. When would Lincoln come?



"Have you ever read this thing by Artemus Ward?"

(Continued on page 127)

The Motherhood of Lyddy Ann

(Continued from page 79)

The usual night crowd, augmented by the returned sailors, had already gathered at Thornton's. As he counted out Lyddy Ann's little store of coins in payment of what he ordered, his name was called in friendly accents from all parts of the room. He gulped down the spirits with feverish impatience. He could feel the glow of the liquor pervade his body, making a man of him, not a mouse to be frightened by shadows.

His money gone, he left the saloon, silently as he had come. Beyond the darkness he knew the little lane awaited his returning feet. Something broke in his throat. No, never any more. The afternoon's work made that impossible. He could not go back.

How long he crouched there he never knew. Dawn found him thus, his face set hopelessly in the direction his feet might not travel. Tramping the silent streets he reached a small park on the outskirts of the town. He sank down then on a bench, though not to sleep; remembrance whipped that peace away. At last, steeped though he was in his bitter thoughts, he became aware of the approaching figures of a woman and a little girl.

The child seated herself and laid a bundle very tenderly upon her lap. Then with impatient hands she tore off the string, and the paper crackled sharply under her touch. Hawley had a brief glimpse of a doll with floating yellow hair, staring eyes and crimson cheeks. The next moment the child hugged the limp body against her breast. "Oh! I couldn't wait," she sighed, as she lifted her face, "I had to kiss her—she is so sweet!"

Hawley sat staring with open mouth.

"My God!" he said, slowly. "Would Lyddy Ann have looked like that? Lyddy Ann—"

A sob choked him, his throat seem to be closing over; he clutched at his shirt, tearing the neckband open. He could not breathe. Then, somehow, he got to his feet, his head whirling. Where to go? Not home? No; never any more. But where—where—what could he do?

Blindly, weakly, with groping, outstretched hands he stumbled along, coming at last—a familiar figure, alas! in the fashion of its gait—into the path of the minister who had given him up. It was no part of David Lindsay's creed, however, to forsake a man in his need.

"Find me work," moaned Hawley when the story was laid bare. "I want to go back to Lyddy Ann."

"Of course you do," Lindsay soothed him, "and you shall have work, too. I know of a job that's waiting for the right sort of man. It's made for you—"

"It is—is it with fifty-seving cents?"

"Tush, man! It's worth a couple of dollars at least.

Come to my study in the morning by half-past six; I'll take you to the place myself."

"I'll be there, never fear, I'll be——" The trembling hands were clenched, their knuckles straining white. "Oh!" Hawley begged, "could I be paid fust off? I know 'tain't uswil, but I can't go home to-day, lest Lyddy Ann——" His voice failed him.

Most men in David Lindsay's place would have met the demand with an abrupt denial; a few would have improved the occasion to point an excellent moral. He did neither of these things. Unhesitatingly he took out his pocketbook—a worn, shabby affair that was painfully flat—and drew thence the only bill it contained. It happened to be a two-dollar bill, and it looked as large to the young minister as it did to the other man.

"To-morrow at half-past six," he said, and continued on his errand without a word of advice or admonition, his eyes dazzled by the sight they had seen.

Hawley uttered a hoarse cry and darted on. Once only he stopped in his mad haste and dashed into a shop.

"The best doll this'll buy, an' the purtiest. Oh! ma'am, hurry with the wrappin's. I dassent wait."

He reached the little lane at last; breathlessly he climbed it.

"Lyddy," he called, "Lyddy Ann."

She was crouching in the doorway, but at the sound of his voice she struggled into a sitting position and turned her face, with the signs of heartbreak on it, wearily toward him. Excessive weeping had washed her eyes dry of all tears and had robbed them even of their color. She seemed turned into stone—without feeling of any kind. He put the bundle on her knees.

"Open it," he commanded.

"Me," she said, tonelessly, "d'you mean me?"

She fumbled at the string with weak, incurious fingers and, unable to wait longer, he stooped and tore the paper off; then he stood back. Lyddy Ann sat very still.

Suddenly life and motion thrilled through her, her arms tightened about the object in her lap and lifted it slowly, closer, closer to her breast.

"Oh!" she cried, her voice trembling with ecstasy, "you're my very own ownest; I'd a-knowed you anywheres."

She crushed the doll to her, devouring it with kisses, and when she raised her head from the long embrace her face had changed. It was shining as with the sun, for love at its best is only another word for light.

Something of this Steven Hawley saw, not through the mist that clouded his eyes, but with the clearer sight of his waking soul.

It Needed God

(Continued from page 70)

Minute followed minute. Volcanic Stanton looked scowling at his watch. And still the chair was empty. They could not wait longer. Something had to be done.

And then suddenly in the stillness—shocking them, thrilling each one, sending the blood up to each head—came the old, familiar, slow steps, and into the doorway slouched the strange figure they knew so well. Queer mortal this—six feet four of blackness—wrapped in a shawl and topped by a stovepipe hat that had seen better days. Six feet four! A common man, but how far above the average height in body, in mind, in soul!

He said "Good morning."

The words came in a squeaking voice—silly, preposterous. He took the empty chair awkwardly, nervously. He looked around at them all. They looked at him. The moment was at hand.

And then he slowly drew out a little book with his big plow-calloused hand. He settled back comfortably in his chair.

"Have you ever read," he began, slowly, "'High-Handed Outrage at Utica,' by Artemus Ward?"

The men of his cabinet gasped—shocked into stone. Was this the way they made history? Was this—the man of sorrows? Yes, the man of sorrows—and laughter.

And then he read, in the drollest, craziest way possible, a page of nonsense from Artemus Ward. When he stopped, these staid history-making men were rocking and swaying in convulsive laughter. All save Stanton. He rose. He burst out vehemently:

"Mr. President—this is a solemn occasion! We cannot afford to laugh! Why do you laugh?"

Abraham Lincoln's face changed.

"I laugh because I must not cry!—that's all—that's all!"

Those men understood in a flash. They said nothing more. Lincoln's face seemed to grow old and

white. His trembling hand drew forth a scrawled-up paper. He spoke slowly, distinctly, in a quiet voice:

"At our last meeting we delayed the Proclamation to wait for a better time. I made up my mind that when the rebel army was driven from Maryland I would issue it. I said nothing to any one, but I made the promise to myself, and—to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out. I am going to keep my promise."

In the hush that followed, those men realized it all. The great deed was done. They were not even consulted. They felt their own nothingness before this tremendous soul—this common American.

"Yes," he went on, "I know I'm not the best man for the position I hold—yet—I'm in that position. Perhaps I have lost some of the confidence of the people—yet whom could I put in my place whom the people trust more? I am here. I must do the best I can and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take! I do this without consulting you on the main point. I cannot. You understand."

They did. There was a terrible silence; they knew that the words he was about to read would on the morrow be flashed around the world, a lightning-stroke of divine hope to enslaved humanity, a flame, a torch to all the peoples, a new Declaration of Independence, a new America. Henceforth the world would be a step further on than before—one step nearer the divine event—one step nearer God. Lincoln had become the great liberator. They never forgot his face as it was that moment—America looking through his eyes, speaking through his lips:

"On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State . . . then in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free . . ."

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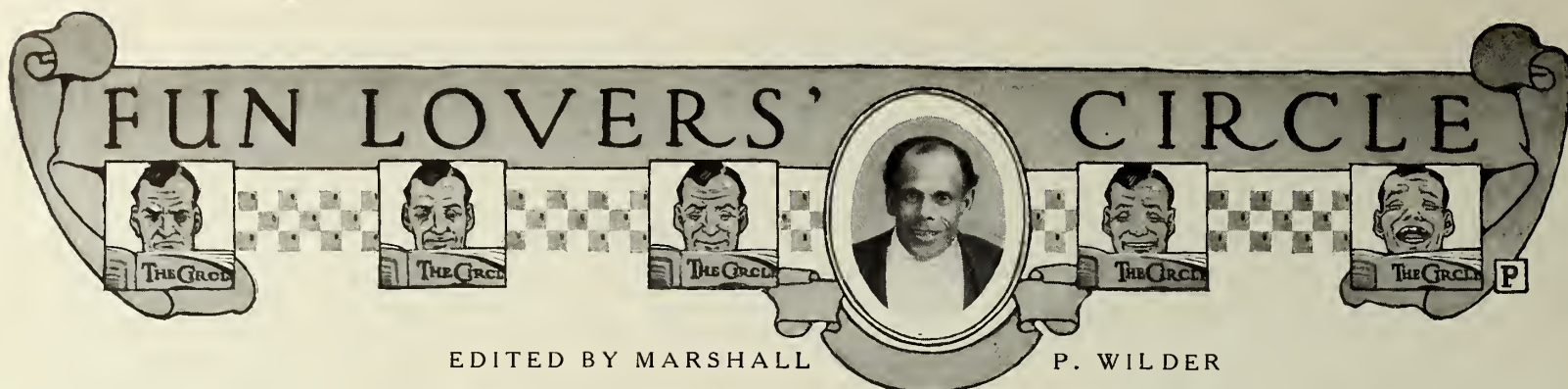
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Garbled Texts

IT WAS a small country Sunday school, and at roll call every separate and individual member was charitably supposed to have provided himself, or herself, by arduous labors with an illuminating verse from the Bible for the edification of the attendant roomful. Bobby, the minister's son, was notoriously deficient in this respect and relied trustingly on the benefactions of his sister.

"Sister," he whispered, as inexorable fate approached him—"sister, tell me a verse." But his sister only shook her head. Time pressed; Bobby returned to the attack.

"But you must tell me one. Papa'll be to me in a minute and what'll I do? Please tell me one."

But the springs of sisterly charity had gone dry. "Every tub must stand on its own bottom," she said.

The minister had reached Bobby's name. Bobby's face wore its accustomed smile. Bobby was indiscriminating. It cannot be said that his Biblical lore was in any wise profound. It sounded right enough to him. He rose in his place. "Every tub must stand on its own bottom," he said.

And thereafter, it is recorded, Bobby stood up longer than had been his wont—and it cannot be said that he did it joyfully.

Her Wasted Efforts

A public-school teacher was explaining the meaning of the word "glutton."

"Now, Tommy," she asked, "what would you call a man who is constantly overeating?"

"Oh," said Tommy, whose father was a sea captain, "he's what you call a stowaway, I guess!"

When He Stammered

He had appealed to the doctor for aid.

"Do you stammer all the time?" asked the man of science.

"N-n-n-n-no," he sputtered, "I only st-st-st-st-stammer when I t-t-t-t-talk."

She Was Wrong

TEACHER: Johnnie, who compiled our first dictionary?

JOHNNIE: Daniel Webster!

TEACHER: No, it wasn't Daniel, it was Noah.

JOHNNIE: Come off, teacher, Noah compiled the ark!

An Island

TEACHER: Children, an island is a body of land entirely surrounded by water. Now, Willie, what is an island?

WILLIE: A person in a bath tub!

Not So Noticeable

"Whenever I use a speck of powder every one notices it!" declared Johnnie's sister to her chum.

"Why don't you use smokeless powder?" put in the boy, overhearing.

A Timely Reminder

The motion of closed street cars has a disagreeable effect on some children. At least, it usually does on little Emily, for almost invariably when she has ridden a few squares in them she becomes dizzy and faint and the only relief then is to signal the conductor and be let off.

One day, however, it did not happen so. Indeed, instead of Emily being so affected by the car's motion it was her little brother, who when the car carrying them both had bowled along a short distance began to pale and show beads of cold sweat.

When frequent glances at his sister failed to reveal her to be in this same uncomfortable state the designing youngster, unable to bear it longer, leaned toward her and said, faintly:

"Emily, it's time for you to get sick and be let off, isn't it?"



Tell-Tails

She Knew Her Lesson

It happened in the music department of a Western college. One of the new pupils was asked by the teacher what took place when the sharp sign was placed before a note. "Oh, I know—it *highers* the note one half," was the ready response.

The Piano Was Wrong

A music pupil speaking of a fine new concert grand piano which had just been purchased for her home said: "It's a beautiful piano; there is only one thing wrong which we must have fixed—the soft pedal moves the whole keyboard!"

The Most Interesting

TEACHER OF ELEMENTARY PHYSIOLOGY: Can any of the class tell me which of all the bones in the body is the most interesting?

"Yes'm," promptly answered up a boy in the rear.

"Well, which bone is it, Eddie?"

"The wishbone!"

Her Valentines



At 6

THE rose is red,
The violet is blue;
Sugar is sweet,
And so are you.

At 16

Not as red, the rose, as your lips,
Nor the violet as blue as your eyes;
And sugar is not near so sweet
As a kiss from your lips, in surprise.

At 36

Still are the roses red,
Still are violets blue,
And sugar still is sweet—
But you, dear wife, are *you*.

At 56

Roses will fade, and the violets, too,
And so does sugar—and so may you;
But my love glows on, as the flowers depart,
And the years grow fewer for us, sweetheart.

"At 66"

The roses are dead,
The violets, too,
And sweetness died out of the world, dear,
With you.

Rangely Thorne

Hurt Himself

"Willie, how's your father?"
"All right, except that he hurt himself this morning."

"Was it an accident?"

"No; premeditated."

"Premeditated?"

"Yes; he gave me a lickin'."

The Love of Jim McMann

By Stacy E. Baker

McMann (the fightin' name av him
Would make your ardor cool!)
Each coleen thought the same av him,
An' none o' thim made game av him
(Och! you should see the frame av him!)

Save little Peg O'Toole.

She chided him with being dumb.

"I'll prove you wrong by this, a sum,"

He said, and he began:

"Now, listen while I demonstrate."

(Then with a *haw* and *hem*) "I state

The lovin' hearts av thim that bate

As two can bate as one!

And will you have me tache you this
And seal the bargain with a kiss
To overfill my cup with bliss;

Peg, will you be my wife?"

She flung him, thin, a hearty laugh

(A-givin' him th' while the gaff);

His heart was stung beneath her chaff,

His soul was keyed to strife.

"I'll have you—yes! But, Jim McMann,
'Tis on the absent-tratement plan.

I'm wantin' you—that way!

I'll not have people say:

'Tis little Beauty and the Baste';

'Twould not be in the best av taste—

I'm kind to you, you see, at last;

Run, minstrel bye, and play!

You're learnin' figgers! Well, I know

Substraction best (*now*, will you go?)

And, settin' here, it seems to be

You're figgerin' too much on me

And gettin' far too gay!"

His mind, I know, on mischief bint,

Without a parting word,

Thin, ploddin' home, the fellow wint

And not a further cint he spint,

Except for thrifin' food and rint—

Though all the byes demurred.

Soon buyin' him a little lot

He placed his mither in a cot

Built with his wages saved;

And, notin' this, the Peg O'Toole

Remembers her the Golden Rule

And tries to turn his manner cool

And give the love he craved.

She goes to him and says, says she,

"You mustn't, Jim, be sore at me.

You're keepin' me in misery

For thinkin' I'm a fool.

I want to learn your sum of two;

I love you true, I do, I do!

I swear before I never knew

The heart av Peg O'Toole!"

She stands before him trim and fair.

(He longs to kiss her auburn hair

But puts the thought behind!)

"I'm sure you're over kind;

I've larned some things av recent date—

Wid bigger figgers on my slate—

But I've forgot, it's sad to state,

The figger *two*, I find."

Thin, changin' as he sees her tears,

"But, cushla, niver have no fears,

For mither and yourself and me

Can figger out the rule av *three*

If you have half a mind."